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**ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
SETTLES PRICE-FIXING CHARGES AGAINST VITAMIN
MANUFACTURERS: WEST VIRGINIA RECEIVES \$1.9 MILLION**

Attorney General Darrell V. McGraw, Jr., today distributed \$1 million to the Department of Health and Human Services as part of the settlement of a historic price-fixing case against top vitamin manufacturers.

West Virginia, 21 other states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia settled antitrust charges against six of the world's largest vitamin manufacturers. The manufacturers have paid \$187,000,000 for fixing the prices and controlling the sale of vitamins and vitamin products. The antitrust conspiracy resulted in consumers and businesses paying an extra quarter of a billion dollars for products over the past decade.

Of the approximately \$2 million that West Virginia received as its share of the settlement, Attorney General McGraw delivered \$1 million to the Department of Health and Human Resources to fund an oral and dental health program for adults moving back into the workforce. The Department of Health and Human Resources will be able to draw down federal matching dollars to boost the overall program to \$4 million.

The remaining amount of the recovery, approximately \$845,000 was distributed through a grant process to 34 nonprofit and charitable organizations which will use the money to fund programs to improve the health or nutrition and/or dietary, nutritional or agricultural sciences in West Virginia.

Attorney General McGraw said, "This is an outstanding example of what vigorous antitrust enforcement can do for the citizens of West Virginia. Nearly five million dollars will be brought to West Virginia to benefit both consumers and critical health and nutritional needs."

The settlement with the six vitamin manufacturers—Hoffman-LaRoche; BASF Corporation; Aventis Animal Nutrition SA; Takeda Chemical; Eisai Co. Ltd.; Daiichi Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd.—is the largest ever under State law that permits consumers and businesses to recover damages for price-fixing overcharges even though they did not buy a product directly from the price fixers.

The vitamins made by these companies were used in a wide variety of every day products including milk, bread, cereal, juices, baby food, pet food, dietary supplements and beauty products such as lipstick and hair care products.

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